



IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL REGULATIONS ON THE MARKETING OF BREASTMILK SUBSTITUTES (BMS) AND RELATED PRODUCTS: THE ROLE OF MEDIA

PREAMBLE:

Breastfeeding is one of the most cost-effective and impactful interventions for reducing malnutrition and under-five mortality—both of which are very high in Nigeria. **The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a child's life, along with continued breastfeeding up to two years of age and beyond.** Research shows that infants under six months who are not breastfed are three to four times more likely to die than those who receive any breast milk.

Improving breastfeeding practices could save approximately 100,000 lives in Nigeria each year and add \$150 million (USD) to Nigeria's economy each year due to increased productivity. Breastfeeding protects children from infectious and chronic diseases, increases cognitive development, and lowers healthcare costs for families and societies. Everyone benefits when mothers breastfeed. Yet despite its unparalleled benefits, mothers and families face significant commercial pressures that undermine breastfeeding.

In 1981, the World Health Assembly (WHA) adopted a resolution for member countries to implement a Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes (The Code) in response to concerns from member states about a rise in infant mortality as a result of promotion of infant formula. The Code is aimed at protecting and promoting optimal infant and young child feeding by controlling inappropriate marketing of breast milk substitutes (BMS). The Code covers products such as infant formula, follow-on formula, growing-up milk, and other related products. Nigeria was a signatory to the adoption of the Code in 1981 and has enacted legislation and developed National Regulations in line with the provisions of the Code.

PROVISIONS OF THE CODE/ NATIONAL REGULATIONS

- No advertising of BMS and related products such as feeding bottles, teats, pacifiers, etc. to the public
- No free samples of BMS and related products to pregnant women, new mothers, or families
- No promotion of BMS and related products in healthcare facilities or by health professionals, including the distribution of free or low-cost supplies
- No company sales representatives to advise mothers
- No gifts or personal samples to health workers
- No words or pictures idealising artificial feeding, or pictures of infants on labels of infant milk containers
- Information to health workers should be scientific and factual
- All information on artificial infant feeding, including that on labels, should explain the benefits of breastfeeding and the costs and hazards associated with artificial feeding
- Unsuitable products, such as sweetened condensed milk, should not be promoted for babies
- Manufacturers and distributors should comply with the Code's provisions even if countries have not adopted laws or other measures

WHY ARE THE CODE AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS SO IMPORTANT?

The Code and National Regulations:

- Promote optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), improving child survival, growth, and development
- Prevent inappropriate marketing practices of infant food manufacturers and distributors
- Monitor progress on Code implementation annually as required by the World Health Assembly (WHA)
- Track progress and ensure that Code implementation targets are achieved
- Detect and accurately document marketing practices by infant formula manufacturers that violate the Code and Regulations for appropriate redress
- Support an enabling environment for mothers to adopt best IYCF practices

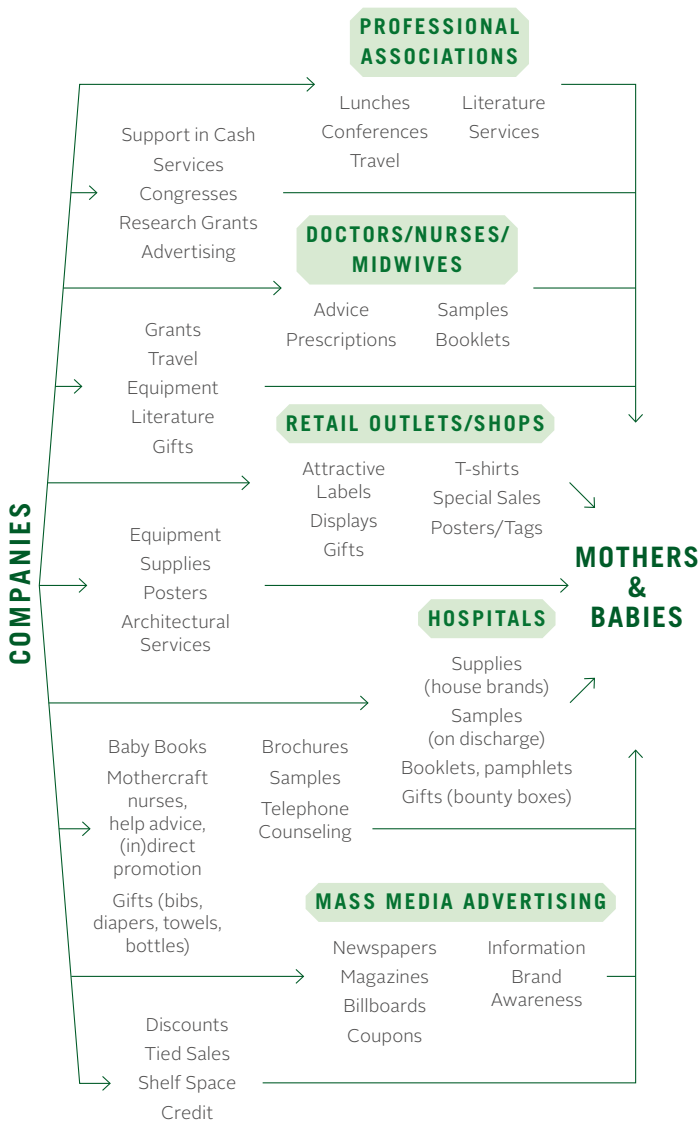
PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS OF THE NATIONAL REGULATIONS

First offenders receive warning letters; after which the following actions may be pursued:

- Seizure of offending articles for destruction
- Confiscation or detention of product to allow possible corrective action

- Closure of business premises
- Invalidation of marketing authorization
- Confiscation of assets
- Prosecution of recalcitrant offenders
- Administrative fines

HOW DO BREAST MILK SUBSTITUTE MANUFACTURING COMPANIES GET TO MOTHERS?



THE MEDIA HAS A ROLE TO PLAY TO PROTECT BREASTFEEDING

Media professionals must:

- Become familiar with laws and regulations on marketing breast milk substitutes in Nigeria
- Train staff to identify and report violations of the Code or related national regulations
- Reject any advertisements promoting breast milk substitute products. NAFDAC does not issue advertisement permits for breast milk substitutes.
- Endorse programmes which promote optimal feeding practices for infants and young children
- Establish crèches in media houses for breastfeeding mothers.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Per article five of the Code, advertising or promoting breast milk substitute products to the general public is prohibited. Similarly, per article 11 of the Code, professional groups should collaborate with the government to uphold the principles and aim of the Code. As a signatory to these international treaties, the Government of Nigeria emphasizes the importance of the Code to ensuring optimal infant and young child nutrition and the survival and optimal growth and development of children, and seeks your support for its implementation and enforcement. Therefore, it is important to understand the overarching tenants of the Code and national regulations; be familiar with baby milk companies operating in Nigeria; and report marketing violations to the nearest NAFDAC office using the relevant monitoring forms.

REPORT ALL VIOLATIONS TO NAFDAC HQ OR NEAREST OFFICE IN THE STATES:

NAFDAC Corporate Headquarters: Plot 2032 Olusegun Obasanjo Way, Zone 7, Wuse Abuja.

Website: www.nafdac.gov.ng | Email: nafdac@nafdac.gov.ng; info@nafdac.gov.ng

Hotlines: 08037024035, 08023021457, 08053235501

